

Workforce Development

Pre-Employment Screenings for New Hires in Direct Care Positions

By Maria Cordero, Director of Human Resources

As part of the Department's Workforce Development Initiative, the Safety Committee is pleased to announce the implementation of the pre-employment screenings for final candidates into direct care positions. The Department has contracted with the Good Samaritans Occupational Health Services (GSOHS) in Avon to provide the pre-screening services. The purpose of the pre-screening is to promote a safer workplace. The pre-screening will be part of the DYS application process and final candidates will be required to pass the screening before they are offered employment with DYS.

The process will consist of four (4) screenings to determine candidate's eligibility for proper placement in a direct care job and the candidate's ability to perform the essential functions of that job.

The screening will consist of the following: 1) Drug Testing; 2) Fitness for Duty Screening; 3) Physical Examination; and 4) Physical Abilities Test (PAT). Due to the safety issues involved in performing the job, final candidates must demonstrate sufficient endurance, strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular fitness to safely meet the physical demands of the essential functions of the job. The (PAT) is designed to simulate an actual emergency situation that occurs on the job. The test is performed in an obstacle course format, progressing through the sequence of test items in a continuous manner.

In January 2008, the Good Samaritans visited our sites and spoke with direct care staff to gather information about the job in order to design and develop the physical abilities test (PAT) appropriate for DYS. In February, 2008, the PAT was "pilot" tested by DYS volunteers who actively participated in the simulated exercise.